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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

balance between high fertility and few and late marriages keeps their number down.

The kernel of the problem lies, of course, in the behavior of the country people. Marriage brings both dispersal of the farm family and change of status for boys and girls. The marriage of one of the sons brings re-formation of the whole family group upon the farm. The crux of the matter lies in this reorganization of the farm family and the mechanism of the change and continuity it provides.

The nearly universal form of marriage in the Irish countryside unites transfer of economic control, land ownership, reformation of family ties, advance in family and community status, and entrance into adult procreative sex life. It is a central focus of rural life, a universal turning point in individual histories. This form of marriage is known as matchmaking. It is the usual, in fact until recently the only respectable, method of marriage and usually too of inheritance.

In Figure 12 the reader will find a graphic representation of the description of the movement of the family and the re-formation of relations which the match involves and which is the burden of this chapter. It explains itself, and it gives a very good illustration of the generalities. Organicists should take heart at its resemblance to an amoeba expanding and budding. But the resemblance is accidental. The examples we cite come nearly all from County Clare, but literary references and interviewing in other places have been made to show that matchmaking prevails almost universally among small farmers with very little local modification. It is furthermore imbedded in the Irish (Gaelic) tongue and very old in Irish history.

A match (Gaelic, *cleamhnas*, marriage, and *spré*, a match) is a contractual marriage made by the parents or families of the marrying parties and involving the disposal of properties. Generally it begins with a farmer's casting round for a

[i.e., that of population decline.—Analyst]

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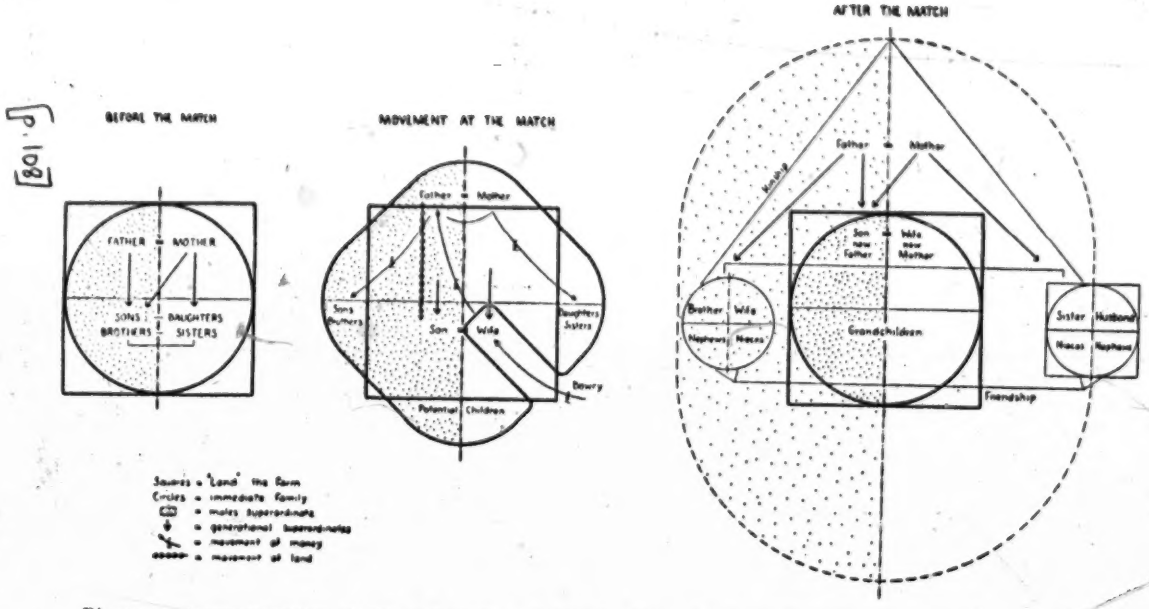
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

FIGURE 19

THE MATCH
(FARM MARRIAGE)



Diagrammatic representation of the re-formation of farm families at the marriage of the heir. The diagram demonstrates the rearrangement of all the constituent relations between persons and the reëstablishment of the equilibrium of the familistic system.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

suitable girl for one of his sons who is to inherit his farm. 581
The choice of the heir from among the sons rests in the 584
father's hands. Historically, all the sons and daughters were provided for on the land, and, where possible, this is still the ideal situation, but the closer identification of family with one particular plot of land and the difficulty of land division fostered through three generations of agrarian agitation and land reform have prevented this. One son, then, is ordinarily to be "settled on the land." Typically today only one son remains, and he gets the farm.

In the words of one countryman, the procedure would be: 583

If I wanted to give my farm over to my son and I would be 584
worth, say, two hundred pounds, I would know a fellow up the hill, for instance, that would be worth three hundred pounds. I would send up a neighbor fellow to him and ask him if he would like to join my family in marriage. If the fellow would send back word he would and the girl would say she was willing (and the usual courtesies were exchanged), then on a day they agreed on I and the fellow would meet in Ennistymon (the local market town) and talk over the whole thing as to terms, maybe sitting on it the whole day. Then, before, if it was land I didn't know or the fellow came from afar off, I would walk his land and look at it and the cattle there were on it to make sure of the farm. Then we would go to a solicitor that day and make up the writings in Ennistymon. The money, say three hundred pounds, would be paid over in cash or in promissory notes, and it is usual here to divide it into two parts or sometimes more. One-half is paid at the wedding, and the other is paid a year after.

This statement contains in essence nearly the whole of matchmaking. As the old fellow indicates, the initiative in the matter lies with the owner of the farm, usually the father of the boy. When the time comes for him to relinquish the farm, he lets it be known in the district to those who have daughters ready to be dowered. On the other hand, the father of the girl may often take the initiative, letting it be known that his daughter has a dowry at such and such a

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

figure. In either case, when a suitable boy or girl has been found, the farmer sends an emissary to his or her parent. The relative value of the farms and the "fortune" that a farmer will give for his daughter are generally pretty well known in the district, but where the two families are comparative strangers, or belong to different localities, the role of the emissary in laying the proposals of one set of parents before the other is more important. The emissary is not a relative of either party ordinarily. Certain individuals become well known locally as successful negotiators. In former days there was once a fully developed "matchmaker" or marriage broker. The office is said to exist still in Connemara, but it has died out in Clare.

Quite often a well-known shopkeeper or local politician comes to play the role. One in particular in Ennistymon (a market town of 1,200) came under the author's notice. The back room of his public house reserved for special customers became one of the centers of local matchmaking. It was there that the fathers of both boy and girl would meet and "sit on the match." Their deliberation, to the accompaniment of many bottles of stout, threshes out the whole matter of the disposal of the properties involved, the relative status of the families, and any possible barriers to the union, such as consanguinity, insanity, or notorious crime in past ancestry.

The bargaining is a matter of nice adjustment between the "fortune" and the farm. The custom known as "walking the land," referred to above, insures that the farm is roughly equivalent to the fortune, though each party strives for a higher valuation of its own claims. Thus, where a fortune of five hundred pounds has finally been agreed upon, the girl's father will have offered only four hundred and the boy's will have held out for six hundred, instancing all the prospects and advantages of his farm in support of his figure. Finally, through the offices of the intermediary

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

and after concessions on each side, the two will "split the difference" and thus reach an agreement. The decision rests with the fathers, but they will have had the quite vocal assistance of friends and older members of the kindred.

Perhaps the words of a countryman best describe the matching of values and prospects the bargaining entails. Farm and spouse are inextricably interwoven in his mind:

> When a young man is once on the lookout for a lady, it is put through his friends for to get a suitable woman for his wife. It all goes by friendship and friends and meeting at public houses. The young man sends a speaker to the young lady and the speaker will sound a note to know what fortune she has, will she suit, and will she marry this Shrove? She and her friends will inquire what kind of a man is he, is he nice and steady? If he suits, they tell the speaker to go ahead and draw it down. So then he goes back to the young man's house and arranges for them to meet in such a place on such a night and we will see about it. The speaker goes with the young man and his father that night, and they meet the father of the girl and his friends or maybe his son and son-in-law. The first drink is called by the young man, the second by the young lady's father. The young lady's father asks the speaker what fortune do he want. He asks him the place of how many cows, sheep, and horses it is. He asks what makings of a garden are in it; is there plenty of water or spring wells? Is it far from the road or on it? What kind of house is in it, slate or thatch? Are cabins good, are they slate or thatch? If it is too far in from the road, he won't take it. Backward places don't grow big fortunes. And he asks too is it near a chapel and the school or near town? If it is a nice place, near the road, and the place of eight cows, they are sure to ask three hundred and fifty pounds fortune. Then the young lady's father offers two hundred and fifty pounds. Then maybe the boy's father throws off fifty pounds. If the young lady's father still has two hundred and fifty pounds on it, the speaker divides the fifty pounds between them, so now it's two hundred and seventy-five. Then the young male says he is not willing to marry without three hundred pounds – but if she's a nice girl and a good housekeeper, he'll think of it. So there's another

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

584 583 drink by the young man, and then another by the young lady's father, and so on with every second drink till they're near drunk. The speaker gets plenty and has a good day. After this, they appoint a place for the young people to see one another and be introduced. The young lady takes along her friends, and maybe another girl, and her brother and father and mother. The young man takes along his friends and the speaker. If they suit one another, they will then appoint a day to come and see the land. If they don't, no one will reflect on anybody, but they will say he or she doesn't suit. They do not say plainly what is wrong. The day before the girl's people come to see the land, geese are killed, the house is whitewashed, whiskey and porter bought. The cows get a feed early so as to look good; and maybe they get an extra cow in, if they want one. Then next day comes the walking of the land. The young man stays outside in the street, but he sends his best friend in to show the girl's father round, but sure the friend won't show him the bad points. If the girl's father likes the land, he returns, and there will be eating and drinking until night comes on them. Then they go to an attorney until the next day and get the writings between the two parties and get the father [boy's] to sign over the land. Then there comes another day to fit her for a ring. The girl and boy meet in town some day. He buys her some present. They walk the town that day and all admire the pair and gander after them.

584 583 577 Several instances have come to notice where agreement was not reached and where a farmer has broken off negotiations on finding a girl with fifty pounds more. There are also many subterfuges which, though they are regarded by others as humorous occurrences, are often sore spots between the contracting parties. Thus a farmer near Ennistymon drove his neighbor's cows into his farm on the day of the girl's father's walking the land so that the other would think him richer than he was. After the marriage the deception was discovered, but too late.

[626] In another case, a sure penalty overtook a farmer who abused the bargaining system. I give the description of a neighbor:

He's nothing but an old blatherer, he was always sitting on matches and saying he would give a fellow his daughter when he hadn't any fortune on her at all. He'd break it off by saying the girl wasn't willing and all the time it was only boasting and drinking the porter he was.

Today the boaster is a local joke, and his daughter has fled to America.

A famous local character round Ennis, a laborer now dead, once bested a countryman through a judicious whetting of the farmer's cupidity at matchmaking. The story goes that the laborer broke the countryman's bargaining resistance by distracting his attention from the cow he was selling at the fair to the prospects of a match between the farmer and a purely fictitious sister, who was dowered with an equally fictitious three hundred pounds. Later when the farmer and his friends came to town again to discuss the matter further, the wit told them elaborately that, after making full inquiries, he had decided they belonged to too respectable a family to allow themselves to make a match with his sister, since the sister had already "a little one" out of wedlock.

Another case of subterfuge practiced illustrates a variation in the match. A fellow near Ennistymon got a farmer with a daughter to back his note at the local bank to the extent of six hundred pounds. The borrowing was kept secret, and the endorser does not seem to have known that the security offered was his own farm. Accordingly, when the borrower later offered to bring in the six hundred pounds in marrying the daughter, the farmer accepted, thinking he was to receive the fortune clear of debt. He discovered only too late that he had a son-in-law whose fortune he must make good himself. The deception led to bad blood between the two, but nothing could be done.

This last example illustrates a reversal of the usual procedure. Ordinarily since the Irish farm family is both

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

583 patrilineal and patrilocal, the fortune is brought in by the girl and goes to the father of the boy. When, however, there is no male heir, the incoming son-in-law must give a fortune to the farm holder. Generally the man's fortune is much larger than that of the girl. It may be that the necessity for its being larger arises from the fact that he has no land of his own. Frequently the farm into which he marries is known for at least a generation longer by the name of the girl's family, which reflects the identification of the patrilineal line with a particular plot of land, so strong in rural Ireland. It may be that the additional payment is deemed necessary to overcome the anomaly felt at the reversal of the usual roles of sons and daughters. The Irish term for an in-marrying son-in-law is a graphic one; it is *cliamhan isteach* (literally, son-in-law going in).

583 A quite similar case illustrates not only the position of
● 584 the man marrying-in but the different aspirations which may be involved. A local politician, a farmer himself, and an automobile driver, a farmer's son, arranged a match for a girl who had lately inherited a farm and a thriving shop in a tiny country town. The prospective groom was a "returned South African" who had brought back two thousand pounds. At the last minute negotiations fell through be
[831] cause the young woman objected to the South African's obesity. The driver was to have got a hundred pounds out of it. We learned that several weeks later a second match arranged for the South African turned out more successfully.

583 The "fortune" is a prerequisite of country marriages. even divorced from its usual family setting. Many instances can be cited where returned immigrants have come back with dowries made abroad, to marry into local farms. In three cases that the authors had under particular observation, the small farmers' daughters had spent five, eight. and ten years respectively in the United States as domestic servants. Each returned to Ireland with dowry enough to

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

permit her to marry into local farms, in two of the cases on a somewhat better scale than the farms which they had left. The case of the South African shows how the man also may return with his fortune to establish himself in his native district after several years or even a decade or two of exile. 583

The dowry or marriage portion is, of course, a phenomenon universal in European peasant life. What gives it special interest here is its intimate connection with the farm family and with the land. That connection is evidenced particularly in the "writings."

After the "walking of the land" and the making of the bargain, the two parties to marry go to a solicitor. There the agreements reached are cast into proper legal form. The "writings" is a legal instrument conveying the ownership of the holding to the son. It is usually both marriage settlement and will. On the event of the stipulated marriage, the father conveys the farm and all appurtenances to his son in return for the portion brought in by the girl. The father makes also definite provisions for his own maintenance and that of his wife. Generally, these include the right to the "grass of a cow," to food and the use of the hearth, perhaps the yield of one patch of potatoes, and the use of a room in the house. The room is nearly always, at least in West and North Clare, the one known as the "west room" for reasons we shall examine later. To take care of possible disputes arising out of the failure of these provisions to work smoothly, certain very hard-headed stipulations are often included, allowing for the conversion of these rights into cash support or a lump sum. 583 584 428 888

In return for the farm, the father receives the fortune brought in by the girl and paid to him by her father. Furthermore, the provisions which must be made for other children are often transferred with the land. The father is now expected to give (if he has not given them already) portions to those of his children who are not to be settled 583 428

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Even where matches are made between strangers, some kind of sexual attraction is not to be neglected, and local custom provides for a brief introduction and a setting for courtship. Several cases came to the authors' notice in which advantageous matches were broken off when either boy or girl expressed distaste for his or her prospective partner, usually when confronted with him or her at the preliminary festivities of the country marriage. Other cases again came to their notice in which a shy suitor could be galvanized into a final decision to take matters into his own hands and press a suit, when his family began to cast around for a match for him elsewhere. Matchmaking was, in fact, far from presenting a scene of "loveless" marriages. The match is a convention like any other. For those who are trained in it, it provides occasion for arousing sexual interest and marital aspirations in young couples quite in the manner of "falling in love" in communities where courtship is more immediately a matter of personal initiative.

And, like any other convention, the match could also come to cloak another situation. The match made by the contracting families is the ideal kind of marriage, for the reasons we have discussed. But it does not necessarily imply any one kind of courtship. In many instances a couple who made their own decision had a match made for them. Even in the case of "runaways," as elopements are called, the boy and girl could often be brought back and a match made for them. And lastly, as a way of establishing respectability and providing for the movement of the re-formation of the family, even those cases of marriage necessitated by premarital pregnancy could be fitted into the dominant convention.

Thus the forms of courtship and the development of pairings among the population of boys and girls of the country communities must all be understood, even in their most unusual forms, in terms of the dominant pattern of the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

182 ships. He may never attain such a view of himself, of course; from his point of vantage, he is a staunch 'friend' and a loyal son and brother. The balance, which we can see objectively, is to him a deep personal intuition.

Now I face the question: How does this balance maintain itself? What does it imply for him? The point round which the balance revolves is marriage. As we have seen, the 'west room' takes its aura from a change which comes over the parental [885] couple; the 'boy' reaches adult status when he marries and inherits the farm. The family and the land are both involved in this crucial reorganization.

584 Country marriage in Ireland follows an ancient and widespread pattern. It is called 'match-making' and it is the sort of *mariage de convenance* involving parental negotiations and a dowry which is nearly universal in Europe. In Ireland its importance is such as to make it the crucial point of rural social organization.

To describe the match one has to sink one's teeth into the countryman's way of life. For the match is made up of many things. It unites transfer of economic control and advance to adult status. It is the only respectable method of marriage and the usual method of inheritance in the Irish countryside. It is embedded in the Gaelic tongue, in joke and story, and in folklore.

A match usually begins when a farmer casts

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

round for a suitable wife for one of his sons. The son to be married is to inherit the farm. The farmer has full power to choose among his sons. A hundred years ago, before famine, clearances and land reform, all the sons and daughters could hope to be provided for on the land. Such a situation is still an ideal, but little more. One cannot subdivide one's holding any longer, and new farms are hard to get. Today the farmer looks forward, ordinarily, to 'settling' only one son 'on the land'.

"When a young man is on the lookout for a young lady", a farmer of Inagh in mid-Clare told me, "it is put through his friends for to get a suitable woman for him for his wife. It all goes by friendship and friends and meeting at publichouses." I think we can remember from the last lecture what he means. Getting married is no carefree, personal matter; one's whole kindred help, even to suggesting candidates.

"The young man", the farmer goes on, "sends a 'speaker' to the young lady and the speaker will sound a note to know what fortune she has, will she suit, and will she marry this Shrove? She and her friends will inquire what kind of a man he is, is he nice and steady. And if he suits, they tell the speaker to go ahead and 'draw it down'. So then he goes back to the young man's house and arranges for them to meet in such a place, on such a night and we will see about it." With this, the first step in the delicate negotiations is safely passed.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

584 The Inagh farmer goes on: "The speaker goes with the young man and his father that night, and they meet the father of the girl and his friends or maybe his son and son-in-law. The first drink is [273] called by the young man; the second by the young lady's father.

"The young lady's father asks the speaker what fortune do he want. He asks him the place of how many cows, sheep, and horses is it? He asks what makings of a garden are in it; is there plenty of water or spring wells? Is it far in from the road, or on it? What kind of house is in it, slate or thatch? Are the cabins good, are they slate or thatch? If it is too far in from the road, he won't take it. Backward places don't grow big fortunes. And he asks, too, is it near a chapel and the school, or near town?"

The Inagh countryman could pause here; he had summarized a very long and important negotiation.

583 "Well," he went on, getting to the heart of the
584 matter, "if it is a nice place, near the road, and the place of eight cows, they are sure to ask £350 fortune. Then the young lady's father offers £250. Then maybe the boy's father throws off £50. If the young lady's father still has £250 on it, the speaker divides the £50 between them. So now it's £275. Then the young man says he is not willing to marry without £300—but if she's a nice girl and a good
273 housekeeper, he'll think of it. So, there's another
584 drink by the young man, and then another by the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

584
[273]

young lady's father, and so on with every second drink till they're near drunk. The speaker gets plenty and has a good day."

The farmer paused here again; for the match is developing marvellously. "All this is one day's work," he continued. "After this, they appoint a place for the young people to see one another and be introduced. The young lady takes along her friends, maybe another girl, and her brother and her father and mother. The young man takes along his friends and the speaker.

"If they suit one another, then they will appoint a day to come and see the land. If they don't, no one will reflect on anybody, but they will say he or she doesn't suit. They do not say plainly what is wrong.

"The day before the girl's people come to see the land, geese are killed, the house is whitewashed, whiskey and porter bought. The cows get a feed early so as to look good; and maybe they get an extra cow in, if they want one." He said this last slyly, for to pretend to own more stock than one really has, is an unfair trick in the bargaining.

"Then next day comes the walking of the land. The young man stays outside in the street, but he sends his best friend in to show the girl's father round, but sure the friend won't show him the bad points.

"If the girl's father likes the land he returns, and there will be eating and drinking until night comes

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

584 on them. Then they go to an attorney next day and get the writings between the two parties and get the father of the boy to sign over the land." With the writings, the match is made, and the wedding can go forward.

This long statement, in fact, contains the essence of the whole of match-making. It serves very well as a general guide. A great deal is at stake in this elaborate negotiation. To our eyes, such a way of winning a wife seems very unromantic. It savours a little too much of hard-headed business. We should call a man a cynic who put farm and fortune ahead of personal attractions.

584 182 Yet we should be wrong to make such an evaluation of the countryman. The sentiments prompting him, and his expectations, are quite different; they must be understood in their proper setting. In matchmaking, the interests of all the members of both families are deeply involved. The match is a convention by which they are expressed and realized. We are prone to forget that a living convention can be just as joyous, even more so, in fact, than bohemian revolt.

182 556 584 For example, the heated, formal bargaining quickly summarized by the quotation has deep significance. It effects a necessary and balanced equality between the two families. Superficially, it seems merely a nice adjustment between the farm and fortune. But looked at more closely, it assures many things.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

The girl's family know that she will be well provided for. They make sure of it when they 'walk the land'. They make sure their standing in the countryside will not suffer. Fortune and farm must be roughly equivalent. In the scale of rural prestige, each farm is valued against the fortune it can pay out with its daughters and the fortune it can bring in with its inheriting son's wife. In the words of the Inagh countryman quoted: "Backward places do not grow big fortunes". And as the farm is identified socially with the family whose members work it, these dowries measure the family's standing.

On the side of the family receiving the fortune, too, interests are served. The girl's dowry comes to them, to be used for their own purposes. With it, they are assured a competent 'new woman', as they call the new wife and daughter-in-law. She is trained to their position in life and to their own habits and sentiments. Girl and dowry are a fair exchange for prestige and alliance.

But these are not the only values at stake. The 'fortune' in the match is woven into the internal necessities of farm family life.

When agreement is finally reached between the negotiating parties, they go to a solicitor to make up the 'writings', as we saw in the quotation. By this, the countryman means they cast their agreement into legal form. For the 'writings' is a contractual instrument which unites marriage settlement and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

584 675 will. Reforms in land tenure have made it necessary recently to give an age-old custom proper legality, since the transfer of the farm is involved.

584 675 888 In the 'writings' the father of the groom makes over the farm and all its appurtenances to his son. In return, the girl's fortune goes to him. The father also makes provision for his own maintenance and that of his wife. It is his abdication, and like Charles V, he keeps only one monastery out of a vast empire for himself. He usually reserves the right to the 'grass of a cow', his keep, the use of the hearth, and the use of a room in the house. That room is the 'west room' already described, the best in the house. Thus, the cycle of life on the farm is completing itself. He and his wife step down from active command.

584 593 In payment for his abdication, he receives the fortune of the girl. A fair arrangement, we should say. But we should be wrong; it is much more. True to the obligations of his social role, he may not use it entirely for himself. The Irish small farmer does not retire, like the Iowan, to sunny California and the Townsend plan. He must meet the interests of the group. Ordinarily, the other children have been stalwart workers in the farm family corporation. They are not to be 'settled on the land'; some other provision must be made. They may come forward now for their long due reward and their corporate share.

Here the purposes behind the match show them-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

selves again. One daughter is ordinarily married into a near-by farm. The family makes a match for her. With her, of course, goes a fortune equal to that the son's bride brings in. Perhaps, a son may be similarly married into a farm where there are only daughters; even though a *cliamhan isteach*, 'son-in-law going-in', as he is graphically called in Irish, must pay a much larger fortune. He has to overcome the anomaly felt in reversing the usual role of sons and daughters and has to compensate the family for the loss of 'their name on the land'.

But it is a very fortunate farmer indeed who can provide for all his sons and daughters so. Usually, only the heir and one daughter are married and dowered, the one with the farm, the other with the fortune. All the rest, in the words of the Luogh residents, 'must travel'.

Thus, either at the match or in preparation for it comes the inevitable dispersal of the farm family. The unit must break up. Time and change are inevitable in human affairs; only an orderly social mechanism can tame their ravages.

The match provides rural Ireland with this mechanism. It accomplishes the necessary transformation of the family. The balance of interests and duties, of prides and loyalties, hinges upon it.

There are two facets to the change, an external and an internal. The distinction is understandable, it is that between internal constitution and external face. Or better, let us state it in figurative terms.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

182 Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage" was pro-
584 found sociology. Life in organized society is a
593 drama. In the match, even though the marriage of one principal is the theme, the action includes the whole cast. Internally, the action forcibly and finally changes the interrelations of all the characters; externally, the parts they play to the audience alter and grow. The changes must run their course till the action resolves itself in the crystallization of a new situation; and the act is over.

It is this dramatic quality which gives the sociologist and the social anthropologist the right to use such terms as 'structure', 'dynamics' and 'equilibrium'. He has that right in describing the life of the countryman. The match brings changes in dramatic completeness. It forces the relationships of the constituent human beings into a new equilibrium and creates a scaffolding for new behaviours and sentiments.

182 Let us look at the external change first. The sons
593 and daughters who must travel are forced out of
166 the closely knit group in which they once had their being. Yet, unless they emigrate beyond hope of call, they do not drop out of sight. The sentiments of years of close association do not die out. It has been a matter of pride and duty with the farm father to provide well for his children. Wherever he can, he has found them an opening. He has sent them into the towns, into the shops, the professions, the trades, and into the Church. As in nearly

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

369 And so he does, if he humanly can, and to that end
443 his savings go.
571 So much for the farmer's son. In his person, he
166 represents a rough one-half of the countryside's invasion of the town. Yet he has sisters, too, at home upon the farm. The attraction of metropolis is no less great for them; they, too, must be provided for in the dispersal of the family upon the land. And with them goes the rural social order and the ties of kinship and community.

In this fact one can see another rough half of the
369 rural tide that sweeps into the ranks of business in
443 the towns. The shop-world taps its country hinter-
571 land again in the persons of the daughters of the
584 farms. The farmer must, if he can, marry his daughter off well; prestige and alliance go with her and the dowry which she carries as her portion. The shopkeeper must renew his ties with the countryside with each new generation, if the shop is to survive. In this coincidence of interest, again, a great deal of the marriage custom of the town revolves. The world of shops and pubs is caught within the ordered mechanism of change called *match-making*, in the same way as is the 'farm of land'.

Currently in country towns, the 'match' is the accepted type of marriage for publican and shopkeeper as much as it is for the farmer. The more sophisticated and more affluent shopkeepers, those who are close, or would like to be, to the higher

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

status of merchant, would repudiate the rustic word. They would tell you that they make instead 'proper marriage settlements'. But their humbler fellow-tradesmen, whose shops have not such pretensions, are closer to the soil. They would admit what is for both of them the fact.

Consequently, one can find in the town, round the shop and pub, the same reorganization of human relationships that goes forward when the country match transfers land and household command to a marrying son. But there is one great difference. In the town one must bring a country-woman in.

If one analyses the census of marriage, age and occupation in the Free State made in 1926, one can see how general this reorganization is. It lies behind the statistics of a great part of the country. Without it, one cannot explain the striking uniformity that gives a roughly similar grouping of individuals by age, by sex, by marital conditions, in all the towns, except the large cities, of southern Ireland. For instance, shop-assistants everywhere are young unmarried men and women. Entrance into the ownership of shop and public-house takes place at the same age as does entrance into married state. Though the towns show no such marked extremes as do the country districts, marriage is long delayed and bachelorhood and spinsterhood are very frequent by world standards. One need not be a demographer or statistician to be struck with the parallel, and to wonder at such coincidence between

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

369 the lives of the followers of occupations so dissimilar
443 as agriculture and retail commerce.
571 For this statistical correspondence overlies the
584 facts of social life. It merely expresses numerically the community of custom between country and town. If one cares to probe deeper, among the lives whose events the census records, one finds the custom at the root of human behaviour and human sentiment. One lays bare the outline of the balance in which the lives of townsmen and countrymen co-mingle in a larger whole.

For setting up a shop means setting up a family; it means marriage and the bringing-in of a country girl. There are exceptions, of course; custom is only a general imperative. Nevertheless, the country match is the generality.

Most often, the shopkeeper-father turns over the shop to the son who is to succeed him when that son marries. The daughter-in-law is the daughter of a farmer of the countryside. Her people 'walk the shop' as they would 'walk the land' in a country match. Long negotiation equates the dowry they give with the shop, its stock, its debts and its prospects. The two families cast the agreement into proper legal form. The shopkeeper transfers his control and his ownership to the son and the son's wife. The other shop children are dispersed and are provided for, where possible. The older generation retires; and a new family is established in business in the town.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

This is a smooth and orderly transition. The shop keeps its identification with human ties unbroken, from parents to children. It renews them once again, outward into the rural hinterland, in the persons of kindred the young wife brings 'into the shop'. The shop's life blood is renewed: literally, in the persons of the new master and mistress; socially, in the extensions of kinship and alliance; and economically, because trade follows personal ties.

The erstwhile apprentice boy, the farmer's son, who sets up 'on his own', follows the same course and makes a comparable transition. His marriage and his setting up his own shop most often coincide. His savings and the bride's fortune make possible, together, many a start in the life of the market-towns. Money buys the shop, credit may stock its shelves, but it is the social alliance, contracted in a country marriage, which supplies the trade upon which business rests.

One might ask here if the role of the sexes is not reversible. Might not the young man marry-in into the shop, and the girl rise from assistantship to full-fledged ownership? Naturally, such a course might well be taken; a social order allows many channels. It has not the rigidity of formal law. Or the girl may inherit a shop, or receive one, in the towns, as her particular portion. For to set up a daughter in a small shop is to provide well for her and to assure her station for her lifetime; even

S:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

369 though little wealth will come to her through that
443 shop door. But in the scheme of social emphases,
571 these courses are the exceptions. Practically, for a
584 finally successful adaptation, the man must rise through an economic apprenticeship. His is the bread-winning role in social life. Only the bride regularly marries into her new station.

171 We are dealing here with a social form of nearly
369 universal occurrence where a society preserves
443 some trace of patriarchal form. It is a structural
571 necessity where class lines cross-cut a familistic
582 order. In India, for instance, it is immediately recognizable to the sociologist; for Hindu society incorporates into religious or formal law much of the social custom which other civilizations allow to flow on unheeded, unrecognized and unplanned. There, a lower caste often marries its daughters into the ranks of the next immediately above. The practice is known as hypergamy.

In Western Europe hypergamy is present, in some times and places notably so. The French have recognized it realistically. And here in rural Ireland, the countryman practises it, when he can, though he would be much surprised to hear his efforts on behalf of his daughter so pedantically described. Yet even though the name would mystify him, he would understand the substance of the custom. His daughter is to be married in such a way as to bring credit and alliance to the paternal line upon the farm. That line stands to

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

369 443 571 582 clusions of a familistic order are. The shop lives on and renews its strength. Its owner, whether he be townsman bred or migrant country lad, must 'bring a country girl into the shop'. Marriage, the establishment of a clientele, and the attainment of full status in one's class, all converge at a single point.

182 369 443 571 584 This order, one must not forget, is nothing esoteric; it is no more mysterious in the towns than it is in the countryside. Habit, sentiment and desire among the constituent human beings, both make it up and are made up by it. It is really the pattern into which all these melt to make a coherency of social life. Nowhere is this fact better illustrated than in the attitudes the Irish townsmen hold about their own positions within this inclusive pattern. For example, I give you the statement of one townsman, of shopkeeper rank, who could summarize the matrimonial aspirations of his fellows in terms of likes and desires. To us he may seem very conservative and early Victorian in his standards; but he is none the less aware of the demands life makes upon his kind:

"When a shopkeeper marries he wants to get a wife who can help him in the shop. He doesn't want one who has grand ideas about what a fine lady she is, because she is no good in the house and will only drive the customers away. That is why he goes to the country to find a wife. The country girl has been reared alongside her mother, she knows how

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

to cook, sew, keep house, and she hasn't a lot of grand ideas in her head that the town girls have. When she comes to town, she feels she's got on in the world; while the town girl will only be wanting more than her husband can give her, or she won't do her share."

The speaker was a townsman, born and bred, but one can see that he endorsed the system heartily. He was an older man who had made his adaptations to social life successfully.

For others, for those whom the life of the town has caught up and who have acquired 'grand ideas', as the last speaker called them, adaptation is more difficult. The town, as I have said, engenders its own near-urban values. These come to conflict with those which unite the shop world to its countryside. Thus ambition is born, which means a severance of old ties. The ties become thwarting chains, and here and there a young man, caught within the pulls of two incompatible forces, becomes a bitter and scornful rebel.

One such young man, who found himself swept back into the ways of the market-towns after a brief flight into larger horizons in Dublin, fought against the fate that closed him in. He tells his own story: "This town is very dull. I don't understand what brings you here. The trouble with everybody here is that they are all misfits and that they are all in jobs they loathe. Successful men give you good counsel: they tell you to work hard and forget your

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

182 troubles. But that is because they are in occupations
369 which they like. There is something glamorous
443 about being a solicitor, and everybody comes to
571 you. I would like to have been one. There will be
● 584 opportunity here when the older men clear out.

"I went off and studied in Dublin for a long while. Then my father died and my mother was stricken with paralysis and I had to come back here and work behind the counter, which I loathe. There's no one else now but my sister. Most shopkeepers make out through their family trade; and the only thing for me to do now is to marry some rich woman in from the country and then all her friends will come in. If you want to get married here there is nothing in it at all but to look out for a country girl. If you don't want to make a fool of yourself and go in for politics, you have to depend on your friends and your wife's friends, and if you can, you've got to marry a girl from the country. Then she'll bring in all her people for miles round, with all their relatives and their married families, and they're the ones that will buy your flour and sugar and tea. You can't get on without them."

182 In this rebellious young man's lament, another
369 aspect of the life of the towns appears and takes its proper place. The social order which demands the maintenance of personal bonds between countryman and townsman carries with it the seeds of change as well. The young man I have just quoted is caught within the very wheels of this change. A

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER XIX

SOME CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS. II.

Shrove Tuesday or " Shraft " was not long ago the great day for weddings in rural Ireland. In older times it seems certain that marriages were celebrated at the seasonal festivals described in Chapter 17. An interesting account of the ceremonies in the barony of Upper Fews, Co. Armagh, was written down in 1818 and has been printed in a pamphlet published by the Dundalgan Press in 1923. It relates how " the courtship of the parties often commences and is carried on at fairs and patrons, and at wakes and funerals, from whence they run away together, that is, the male brings the female, sometimes by force, to one of his friends house." It goes on to describe the negotiations between the two families and the fixing of the bride's portion or dowry. On the wedding day the two parties, consisting of from 20 to 40 relations, contend, on horseback or afoot, " for who will be at the bride's house first ; where, when the parties arrive, the bridegroom and bride are presented with a plate of oatmeal and salt, of which each of them takes three small mouthfulls. After this the parties mount their horses and join in one grand cavalcade to the alehouse and then to the priest. Whichever of the new married couple first rises after the nuptial benediction will, it is considered, live longest."

Following another visit to the alehouse the parties separate and " scamper away towards the bride's house,

[p. 171]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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There are three or four small shops, but only one has a regular counter, and it is also the only public-house on the islands. 444

There is no regular employment for labourers, but occasional work is paid for at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day. 465

The women, besides attending to the ordinary domestic duties, help the men at field work, at seed time and harvest, and at drawing sea-weed for manure; they card, dye, and spin the wool for clothing, and in rough weather, when supplies from the mainland are short, grind oats or barley in the quern, either for the cattle or for domestic use. This is extremely hard work, and requires two women, one to work at the grinding, and the other to feed the grain from her apron. They also employ part of their time at quilting or knitting. The average annual money handling of a family is from £40 to £50. 462 [434]

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The children of a family, who are usually numerous, are sent to school when about four years of age, and at first attend regularly; but as they grow older their attendance is often very irregular, as they are liable to be kept at home by their parents to assist at field work in times of pressure. They are said to be very smart and intelligent, but their progress is interrupted and checked by this cause. At the age of fourteen or fifteen years, when they have reached the second stage of fifth class, they are taken from school, and then enter into the regular routine of household and farm work until they either marry or emigrate. They marry young, generally for purely family reasons, romance not entering into the case. Courtship as a regular institution does not exist; and if exceptional cases occur they must be rare; as for two young people of opposite sexes to be seen walking together is looked upon as being decidedly wrong. Matches are arranged by the parents from considerations of suitability of families, not, as in many other places, by money bargains. As soon as an arrangement is come to between the elders, usually before Shrove, the young man goes and asks the girl personally; if he be refused, which sometimes, though seldom, happens, he considers himself disgraced, and is often inconsolable. The marriages often take place without any rejoicings or social reunions, the young couple going quietly home after the ceremony is over. In some cases they set up house afresh on their own account, but if the bridegroom be the eldest son who usually inherits the parent's house, &c., the bride goes to live with his family. 871 584 585 591

Mr. Michael Lavelle, to whom I am indebted for much valuable information as to the customs and folk-lore of the people, informs me that he has heard that sometimes, on the occasion of a wedding, 585 [115]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

was twisted into a three-stranded plait. Standing back at a mark, the reapers threw their spinning hooks at it in turn until it was severed and 'stretched'. At this a triumphant shout was raised. The cailleach was sometimes 'waked' before it was lifted: the 'corpse' was hung round the neck of the triumphant slayer, who was guest at the subsequent 'churn' (the harvest feast and dance) and who was fated to be the reaper who would be first married. It was, perhaps, more usual for the cailleach to be put around the neck of the master or mistress of the house. From the threat of being hanged by it they would purchase their freedom by providing the churn supper, for which special food was prepared. There are many variant practices but it is clear that they all turn on the same themes, the spirit of the corn and the luck of a speedy harvest. In some districts the cailleach was known as the hare, and the cry which kept the toiling shearers to their task was; 'We'll put the hare out of it today!'

It was customary to hang the churn in the kitchen, either over the door, on the dresser, or about the chimney hearth, and to keep it until the following harvest, when it was given to the cows. Or it might be fed to the horses on the first day of ploughing. In some houses the last sheaf was preserved year after year, and I have seen specimens half a century old. One of these was dressed with coloured papers, hinting that there was formerly more ceremony connected with the last sheaf than has survived. These dressed cailleachs figure in the harvest festival decoration in some churches in Co. Armagh, where also miniature corn ricks surmounted by a harvest knot are displayed, the Church thus having won over and preserved the pagan symbols of harvest (See Tailpiece).

Harvest knots or bows are decorative twists of straw which were worn by the harvesters, and are still quite commonly carried by young men at harvest time in some districts (Plate 13, 1). Girls would wear them in their hair, boys in their coats, and in former times they were exchanged by the sexes as a sign of mutual attachment. They are made in a fine plait of two straws tied into loops or interlaced, those worn by the girls having the ears of the corn left on. The best examples are made from wheat, and some exceptionally fine specimens are made from

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

trade in 1825.[1] Formerly it was at the fair that country folk purchased the specialized goods that could not be home-produced—edged tools, vessels of wood and metal, pieces of delph, and such colourful trivialities as beads and ribbons. The pole-lathe on which wooden vessels for the dairy were turned was known in early Christian times if not before, and a few examples are still in use. It seems probable that the turners once utilized a living branch as a spring-pole, like the bodgers of the Chilterns. At any rate we read of Co. Meath, early last century, that 'turners and wooden dish-makers generally build a hut in a wood that is being cut, and reside there while the timber is felling, buying and working those kind of trees most suited to their purpose and paying for them as the manufactured goods are sold'.[2] Today the turner selects and fells his own trees, preferably sycamore, and works them up in his own yard.

The churn-maker also had his stand at the fair, and there were the noggin-weavers and sieve-makers, the carvers of ladles, wooden spoons and butter prints (Fig. 88), and the makers of baskets and creels. Here also forgathered the beggars and ballad-singers, fiddlers, pedlars, gamesters, and the trouble-makers and the match-makers. It was a recognized practice for a bachelor to be on the look-out for a mate, or for a match-maker if things had gone far enough, and for the men of one parish to seek to settle old scores with enemies from another parish. There is some evidence that trial marriage contracts, binding for a year, were at one time an accompaniment of the fairs. Like the Scottish hand-fasting, the system allowed the husband to test the usefulness and fertility of the wife. Nor should we forget the games and horse-racing, and into the nineteenth century the cock-fighting and bull-baiting, which have long been associated with the great fairs.

Down to fairly recent times all the fairs were held on saints' days or at the movable feasts of Easter and Whitsun, and if the saint was a local one the fair, as at Kilorglin, was also a pattern, that is a festival associated with the patron saint. Unless the church has been able to keep a firm hold on the proceedings, these patterns have degenerated until many of

[1] See also De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland, 1796–97*, 250.
[2] R. Thompson, *Statistical Survey of the County of Meath*, 253.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FIXED FESTIVALS

Easter would take us away from our present subject but mention must be made of some of the folk practices connected with Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Whitsuntide. Shrove Tuesday (Shraft) was a time for hunting the hare, and for feasting in preparation for Lent. A portion of the meat was not eaten but hung in the rafters. It was the great day of the year for marriages, and on that night tricks of many kinds were played on unmarried adults and on courting couples who had not fulfilled their promise. They were serenaded with horn-blowing; animals were tied to the doors of their houses, and cart wheels were rolled down hill. At Ardmore in Co. Waterford a piece of symbolic horseplay was performed by the young men on Ash Wednesday. A hollowed stone with a hole in the centre was the scene of the play. In the hole was stuck a wattle with a handful of tow tied to its top, and unmarried women were made to dance around the stone, holding the tow and spinning while they danced. 'The youths then terminated their amusements by dragging them through the village seated on old logs of wood.'[1]

Good Friday was an important day in the farmer's year, the luckiest day on which to begin the sowing of corn. There was an aversion to the use of iron and to the shedding of blood on Good Friday, which was a favourite day for visiting holy wells and the graves of the dead. Shell-fish were eaten, and visits to the shore were enlivened with games and horse-racing. On Easter Day the young folk would be up early in the morning to see the sun dance, and during the day vast quantities of eggs were consumed. The colouring and rolling of eggs are customs kept up by children in many districts. A special Easter Day dance, for which the prize was a large cake exhibited on a garlanded churn-staff, is popularly supposed to have given rise to the expression 'taking the cake', in the sense of beating all comers. If Easter was a lucky time, ominous superstitions attached to Whitsuntide, for example persons born at that time were supposed to have the evil eye, to be fated to die a violent death, or to take a life. A chicken would sometimes be killed in the hands of a Whitsun child to serve as a substitute slaughter. To cross water or go to sea at Whitsun was to invite death by drowning.

[1]E. Fitzgerald, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1856), 48.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cairn on the summit of Slieve Croob was until recent years the scene of a great gathering on the first Sunday in August. The fiddling and dancing are no more, though numbers of young people still assemble there and frolic in the heather. Blaeberries (bilberries) were picked into little rush baskets made on the spot (Fig. 70) and that the occasion was recognized as a legitimate time of courting is shown by the comment that 'many a lad met his wife on Blaeberry Sunday'. The name Garland Sunday derives from the hoops decorated with ribbons and flowers which were made by unmarried girls and, latterly, carried to church before being set up in the graveyard to preside over the dancing with which the day terminated. Rites in honour of the dead seem to have marked the old Lammas festival, so that again we notice the association of ancestral spirits with the fertility of farm and family.

By St. Bartholomew's Day, 24th August, harvest is well under way and the first-saved corn is ready to be thrashed. By tradition the flails were made ready on this day, and if the high harvest winds are blowing it is said that the saint is testing his flails. Next comes Michaelmas, 29th September, linked closely with the sea, with horses, and, strangely, with the ceremony of killing a cock or a goose, originally as a sacrifice in honour of the saint. In some parts Michaelmas was regarded as one of the most important feasts of the year, but I have not found any districts where it was, as in Uist, 'much the most imposing pageant and most popular demonstration of the Celtic year': nor have I come across any tradition of the rites of digging up and making presents of wild carrots which was associated, in the Hebrides, with the eating of cakes made of mixed flour baked before a stone flag, with the killing of a lamb, visits to graveyards, and a night of 'dance, song and love-making'.[1]

Throughout Ireland these lesser feast days pale in comparison with the culminating festival which marks the end of the dying year on All-Hallows Eve. An astonishing amount of lore still clings to Hallowe'en, and we must restrict ourselves to picking out some of the main elements of this crowded occasion. The crops should now be all gathered in and no fruit should be picked

[1] A. Carmichael, *Carmina Gadelica*, I (1928), 198.

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

The Irish birthrate remains high, and despite delayed marriages the population would continue to increase were it not for emigration, latterly to Britain instead of America. Moreover, sterility is still regarded as a disgrace, and superstitious practices find one of their last pathetic appeals in attempts to be cured of 'the sterile curse'. Among a peasant people a childless marriage is an economic and social tragedy. There is some evidence that, in the north of Ireland at least, trial marriage or bed-fellowship (bundling), as in Wales, the Hebrides, Norway and Holland was an accepted preliminary of marriage and a means to which the fertility of a prospective partner was tested. The reliability of the notorious Richard Twiss as a witness may be impugned, but in this instance his account of the custom in Co. Fermanagh is likely to be true[1] since there are living traditions of trial marriages in Counties Antrim and Londonderry.

For the most part, these immemorial attitudes did not survive the crisis of the famine and the watchfulness of a now well-organized priesthood. The fertility rites of wakes for the dead and the unashamed courtships which were carried on at patterns and at the great seasonal festivals find a plausible explanation in the fact that they occurred at times and places where the spirits of the dead were waiting to be reborn. The gatherings at hill-top burial places attested by tradition and the legendary histories were similarly drawn together by the pull of ancestral spirits. The name Dermot and Grania's Bed which is applied to many megalithic graves gives these ancient monuments a reputation which is evident in a belief recorded by Hely Dutton in Co. Clare early in the last century: 'If a woman proves barren, a visit with her husband to Dermot and Grania's Bed certainly cures her.'[2] And the Saints' Beds associated with many ancient church sites have taken over some of the megalithic magic, for they have the power of curing of barrenness a woman who spends the night there.

If the youthful marriages of pre-famine days seem far removed from the carefully arranged matches of the present-day peasantry, it should not be concluded that they were casual and

[1] R. Twiss, *A Tour in Ireland in 1775*, 103.
[2] H. Dutton, *Clare*, 318.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

584 not subject to recognized laws of marriage. Romantic unions there must have been, but among the farming population they would have been followed by prolonged arguments and arrangements as to the bride-price. An unusually detailed account of marriage customs in County Armagh in the early nineteenth century is worth quoting at some length:

'The acquaintance and courtship of the parties often commence and are carried on at fairs, patrons and other public places of rural sports and amusements, and at wakes, funerals, etc. from whence they run away together—that is, the male brings the female to one of his friends or relations house. This was heretofore sometimes accomplished by force . . . Shortly after the running away, as it is termed, some of the female's relatives follow her and negotiations commence respecting the match, which often terminate by the female's unhappy father being obliged to promise more portion than his abilities will allow, in order to preserve the reputation of his daughter. The match being agreed upon and the day appointed for the wedding, the intended bride is permitted to return to her father's house, where a scene of preparation commences for the wedding dinner, which generally consists of bruised potatoes and flour . . . and large quantities of oatbread and butter.

585 'On the day appointed for the wedding, the bridegroom's party, from ten to twenty of his relations . . . mount their horses, the women behind the men, except a few of the latter that are single and intend running for the bottle, and advance towards the bride's residence, where they are met by a few single horsemen belonging to the bride's party. When the parties meet, those of them that are single-mounted then contend for who will be at the bride's house first; where, when the parties arrive, the bridegroom and bride are presented . . . with a plate of oatmeal and salt, of which each of them take three small mouthfuls; probably to prevent the power of witchcraft or the effect of an evil eye. After this the parties . . . mount their horses, and the whole then join in one grand cavalcade, the van being led by the bridegroom; the bride riding behind the bridesman, until they reach the ale-house most convenient to where the priest lives. (Here it should be explained that there were few Roman Catholic places of worship

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

585 [777] [273] The good luck of the bottle race referred to above may be associated with the 'agreement bottle' of whiskey which was drunk, according to a seventeenth-century account, when the parents and relations of the young couple had reached a marriage agreement.[1] To this day in parts of Co. Down 'running for the broth' is a feature of country marriages, a bowl of broth being the reward given to the person who reaches the bride's house first after the wedding. Until recently, also, the young couple were expected to appear at the Bride's Show on the first Sunday after their marriage: they were accompanied to a special sloping field where they ran hand-in-hand to a stone near the bottom of the field, followed by pairs of linked boys and girls, each boy kissing the stone. Games and what was described to us as 'general carrying on' followed the Bride's Show.[2]

584 In more remote parts of the country match-making is still a recognized procedure. The professional match-maker is a well-known figure, usually a shrewd elderly person well versed in the arts of rural diplomacy, and his role has been fully described by Arensberg. He acts for the farmer who is ready for his son to marry—the son being often well into middle age—by negotiating with the parents of the girl whom the farmer has selected. In the prolonged bargaining as to the amount of the 'fortune' which the girl is to bring with her the values of peasant living stand clearly revealed.[3] Marriage is not so much a personal relationship as a union between groups, reinforcing relations which extend far beyond individuals.

There was a popular belief that the curse of sterility could be placed on the bride by any ill-disposed person who tied knots in a string during the marriage ceremony. A more obvious example of magic was the custom of tying a hen which was about to lay an egg to the bed-post on the marriage night.

[585] There are widespread traditions of the days when landlords exercised the *jus primae noctis* over their tenants' wives, and one hears of leases which contained clauses governing the right.

844 During pregnancy it was lucky to do certain things and to avoid

[1] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 1, 122.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 193
[3] C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman*, ch. 3.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

returned to its original position.'[1] St. Olan's Stone is a boulder bearing impressions which are regarded as being the imprint of the saint's feet. Many such marked stones, including some which are clearly artificial basin stones, have been regarded with superstitious awe up and down the country and were generally interpreted as the result of a saint's kneeling or standing on the spot. It is natural to suppose that these hagiological interpretations were substituted for another set of beliefs which attached the virtues of strength, healing and fertility to cup-marked stones.

Not infrequently cup-holes are found bored through thin slabs of stones, and these 'holed stones' are invested with aphrodisiac powers. We have referred to the ceremonies associated with the Ardmore stone in Chapter XIX, and the practice of erecting a stick or pole in similar stones at one of the major festivals is recorded from other localities. Wood-Martin wrote of the Hole Stone at Doagh, Co. Antrim: 'Marriage contracts are still ratified at this spot, as country couples go there to signify their betrothal by clasping hands through the hole.' Again, 'at the holed-stone of Clocnapeacaib, county Cork, women were in the habit of drawing some of their clothes through a hole, when their confinement was approaching, to secure a favourable result, and a similar practice is followed in many other localities of women similarly situated drawing clothes through the perforated arms of ancient Irish circular-headed stone crosses'[2] (Pl. 15, 1).

Before leaving this subject I should refer to certain cup-marks which have been utilized down to recent times for the purpose of making stone balls for the game of 'bullet-throwing'. Played along the country roads, and now prohibited in Northern Ireland because it endangers traffic, its main home is in Co. Cork, where it is known as bowling. One will occasionally surprise a game in progress in the Belfast hills or around Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, and it is here that stone bullets were manufactured within living memory. The 'bullet-holes', three to four inches in diameter and an inch or two deep, are worn in the flat tops of boulders in the process of hammering into a

[1] P. J. Hartnett, *Béaloideas*, 10 (1941), 103.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 239–42.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land, and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on, the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several manifestations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleamhnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drinking and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleamhnas*, but now the service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Numerous factors are weighed by the representatives of the future spouses before a match is consummated. Uppermost in the minds of the relatives of the man is the size of the dowry that the woman will bring to the marriage. In the decade 1951 to 1960, the average dowry was 50 to 60 pounds, but at least one reached 100 pounds. This sum now is used to finance the wedding party, but once it went to provide the passage and "settling in" money for an emigrating sibling, to furnish the dowry for a daughter, or to make life more comfortable for the aging parents. Land and capital (and other status attributes soon to be discussed) possessed by the father or widowed mother of the man are the focal concern of the woman's relatives during matchmaking. Among the factors which enter into the deliberations of both bargaining parties are: the presence in either family line of mental illness or other afflictions which can stigmatize, the economic skills and industriousness of the potential spouses, the number of cognates (relatives on all sides of ego limited only by degree of kinship) which compose the two kin-groups and their propensity to assist and defend (and not to engage in disputes), and the mutual attraction of body and personality of the future spouses. The folk believe that young persons approaching marriage "should have known each other for a long spell" and that "the two should be alike"—as to family position, education, and temperament. It is common for a woman to choose not to marry a man to whom she may be attracted because his mother is overly jealous and domineering, or there are "too many old people in the house."

Most weddings take place on Tuesday during the hour before noon, at the direction of the curate, but at one time they were conducted between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests could hurry back to the groom's house "to make a night of it;" the morning ceremony means that festivities commence in mid-afternoon and the party often is "stale by nightfall." Each family invites its circle of relatives and friends who congregate at the respective domiciles in the morning, where the men are served whiskey. The groom's entourage then accompanies him to the house of the bride, and another "round" is proffered them before the procession is formed for the journey to the chapel and back. Three men lead the column at some distance from the bride and groom, to ward off those with the evil eye or any other malignant forces which might threaten the couple. Close behind the bride and groom are the "best man" and "maid of honor," followed in order by the two fathers, male guests in a group, and at the end female guests; the two mothers do not attend the wedding, nor does the bride's mother participate in the matchmaking or allow her daughter to return home until a month following the nuptials (Formerly, she did not enter her daughter's house until a grandchild was born.).

Grooms long have worn mainland attire for the ceremony, but only in 1960 did the first bride do so. Before then, the woman wore a new blue petticoat, accouterments purchased in shops at a nearby mainland port, and a shawl for the first time, draped over the shoulders. Her hair had remained uncut until this day, and she and the groom wore borrowed items of clothing—she usually the shawl and he a coat or tie—to bring luck to their marriage. During the nuptial service, the man not only places a ring on the finger of his bride, but gives her seven shillings with which to buy later a holy picture, or some other object of her

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

govern our "morality, custom, and manners" (e.g., persuasion, ridicule, and gossip). I will not consider political and economic manipulation; more significant are other techniques that I have labelled secular social control. Inis Beag, as much as any human community, is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium. Influenced by nativism, primitivism, and structural-functional theory, writers and social scientists have painted a distorted picture of culture and personality equilibrium among Irish peasants. Actually, the folk are neither glorified Celts nor "noble savages," and dysfunctional sociocultural forms, mental aberrations (neuroses, psychoses, and psychosomatic disorders), and exaggerated defense postures abound.

Inis Beag people are ambivalent about gossip; they welcome every opportunity to engage in it, yet detest the practice when they are its victims. When asked to cite the major deficiencies of their way of life, islanders usually place the prevalence of malicious gossiping near the top of their list. Boys and men hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby; they maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Parties are organized at the last moment and persons will leave the island without any previous announcement—often to emigrate or enter the hospital or join a religious order—in order to circumvent gossip. Rumors run rife in Inis Beag, especially when they concern, for example, the "nude" sun bathing of a visiting actress (bared shoulders and lower thighs) or the "attack" on a Dublin girl late at night by an island youth (an effort to hold her hand while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on our part to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual fantasy at their core in every case.

The force most responsible for limiting the potential social activities of women—which would make their lot much easier and possibly stem the tide of emigration—is the fear of gossip: "If I went for a walk, they'd wonder why I wasn't home tending my chores." Even couples who might otherwise disregard religious teachings and the wrath of the priest do not court, because it might be observed and reported through gossip to the entire population.[7] An islander must carefully regulate his

[7] The fear of being observed, as well as repression, may account for the apparent lack of sexual contact with animals. This practice may be common among mainland peasants, if one is willing to accept as evidence the existence of a genre of dirty jokes popular there, and hearsay among certain scholars concerning confessional materials.